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THE YEAR OF OUR BEGINNING

by Thomas Nugent

That was the year when we ran through the leaves. The air was charged with autumn. Beneath our feet the sycamore leaves shattered with crisp sounds of breaking. We would run past the fountain at three o'clock. It stood nudely silver above the barren park, poking its chipped, dripping nose into the middle of October. The wind fluttered musty-smelling papers beneath the marble deer, and one day soon we knew something good was going to happen. We ran, it seemed we always ran, fingers still cramped with the ink-stained stories we had to write for Mrs. Benson. Thinking of the warm dinner soon to be eaten and then Highway Patrol (fantastic adventures on television later) we leapt in frosty hunger through the sun-splintered afternoon.

The games. Hands red and stinging, we flung ourselves at football. The ground was solid, thick with bright leaves beneath us. Win! The air flashed into our lungs, spiced with the odor of burning pine-needles. Racing, chasing the sphere of shadow-leather, we played into the dusk; until the wind, busy with the sweat on our bodies, chilled us with darkness. Then we would walk down Varnum Street. The trees rattled above us—a door opened somewhere and the light from a porch suddenly illuminated leaves blowing in the gutter.

"Yeah. Nobody picked the Yankees last year and they still won. They're better than the lousy Dodgers any day."

"Oh, yeah? Erskine's the best pitcher in the league. They'll win for sure."

We walked silently then because Frankie Pringle's grandmother was coming toward us with the dog. She walked the dog every night, right at twilight. She was old, and her face was like a net of blue wrinkles. She always wore pink lace and high-topped shoes that looked like dirty iron. When she talked to you her throat shook and you thought she might cry if you did something too fast. Her voice sounded like rags tearing. We figured her throat was getting rotten.

But she wasn't mean. One time she called Ted and me over and gave us ice-cream with nuts in it. She was all right—just old. Every

night she walked along the sidewalk and we heard her call the dog softly, almost chanting: "Troubles. Stay Troubles. Troubles." The words seemed to blow away as she said them, and the dog never heard. But they walked on anyway, both of them looking straight ahead. We didn't say anything because Frankie Pringle was with us. I remembered the time when I was collecting for the paper route and she held up the coins, shaking a little saying; "You think, Tommy. You be a little businessman, hear me? Nothing can stop you if you're a little businessman!" I looked at the frayed pink lace. What did she know about business? What did she know about anything? But I said "Yes Ma'am," and left, a little embarrassed about something I wasn't sure of.

We knew Ted Billings hated her, ever since the day he kicked a pile of leaves all over her yard and she came out with a big bamboo rake and made him clean them up again. That afternoon, in front of Byrd's grocery, he called her Old Bitch Pringle twice, and the second time the Reverend Boyle must have heard, because he went straight to her and told. She was at his house before dark, standing on the front porch with a yellow bar of laundry soap in her hand. Ted Billings' mother came out and Pringle said, "I believe your son wishes to have his mouth washed out with soap." She handed his mother the soap and marched away, lace snapping in the wind. But we didn't mind her. It was just that she was old, and not like us. She must have lived worlds away from our eager sense of things changing. The days were hissing by, and we thought little of her.

II

That was the year when we stood outlined in the smoke of secret fires. Saturdays we hid behind the American Legion Hall and roasted dirty hot dogs. The long, broken-eyed building was full of dust. Inside we could see the flags of all the countries of the world curled into a bright knot. We would kneel in the weeds out back, and the smell of burning Saturdays hung around us like

a shimmering veil.

October was ending and we could feel it. You would lie in your bed, late, and listen to trucks clawing along the highway. They were going somewhere, huge blocks of steel screeching through dark, intimate tunnels and finally roaring into New York where everyone stood back at the sight of them. Lying there, you saw the tail lights flicker out at you, red with the electric sting of big cities. The curtains hushed against the window in the room you could not leave, and turning away, you were sure you felt the beginning.

III

In November it rained. We sat in Frankie Pringle's furnace-smelling cellar and talked about naked women. There were piles of old newspaper for us to sit on while the mud dried and cracked on our shoes. Behind us rust-colored rainwater clanked through an iron drainpipe and darkened the cement floor.

"Yeah," said Frankie. "They're out there every night. I've watched 'em lots of times right on the porch. Bet they do it."

Frankie Pringle knew more than any of us. He even said he'd almost done it once himself, but couldn't because he didn't have any protection.

"You can't go in there without any protection!" he said.

"Go in where?" Wint Chambers asked, and Frankie laughed with only one half of his mouth, a tough laugh.

"Kid, you better go ask your mother, because none of us is going to tell you."

Wint Chambers cracked his knuckles, red-faced, looking down at his shoes. We could tell he didn't know anything.

"Yeah, they're out there all right," Frankie said. "Out there and probably doing it. Every night."

We all spoke at once.

"Hey, Frankie, why don't we—"

"sneak up back and get a look at—"

"Hold it! Hold it!" Frankie spoke in a deadly monotone. "You boys thought about the risk?"

A hush fell over the cellar while we thought about the risk. You could hear the rain spattering the leaves outside. The Pringle's

black cocker spaniel lumbered through the cellar door and shook himself next to the stove. Nobody said anything until Frankie spoke.

"All right. It's rough, but it can be done."

We nodded. It was rough.

"But only three of us can make it. Two people can't go."

Wint Chambers began looking out the window, watching the cars splash along Var-num Street. He knew he couldn't go.

"Chambers, you stick behind this time. O.K.?"

"Right!" Chambers piped. "I'll be a look-out, in case of trouble."

Pringle wasn't listening. "All right. One more guy's gotta go."

The room was silent again, this time in an agony of suspense. Who would be the guy to go?

"Dickerson, I want you with Chambers across the street, in front of my grandmother's house. Carry binoculars. Anybody comes, you know the signal."

My eyes blurred with shame. I was tougher than Billings! Why did it have to be me?

"Yeah. I got you. We'll be ready," I said evenly, looking as dangerous as I could. "We'll be ready."

"O.K. That's got it. Billings, Kunkel, and me will be in the tree-house above the porch. Boys, I think we're in for a little something tonight." Pringle rose, and we headed home for lunch, knowing we were in for something that night. We were sure of it.

IV

That was the year when supper buzzed in your stomach. You would sit slouched over in the tall, polished chair, digging at cana-lope with a tarnished spoon. Mary Anne was dressed in her pink evening gown and sat glittering nervously across from you. It seemed she was always going to the prom. Jimmy asked if you thought you could escape once you had been thrown into a pit full of red lizards and Mom cracked him. Dad leaned back, rubbing the wart on his nose, and said that if a few things didn't shape up around here, there would be some changes made and the honeymoon would be over.

Everybody looked down for a minute, until he shuffled over to the armchair and flipped the television to ringside wrestling on Channel 9. Then it was over, and you tried to get out.

"May I please be excused?"

"No you may not. Finish that milk."

Gulping it, forcing it down, you could already hear Wint and Ted at the back door, Wint shouting, "Let's get moving, man!"

"Two hours Tommy. No more. If you don't believe me just try staying out longer and see where you wind up tomorrow night."

"Yes Ma'am. See you." Finally you were through the door, running into a dark wind that swept you away from the smell of fried onions and blew terrifically with the bitter, secret incense of your beginning.

V

It is autumn. The leaves rustle like paper, and the lawn is crinkled with frost. She sits on the porch, moon-splashed, waiting. The shadows come in gusts, hissing through the grass. Above her the moon is dripping in the trees, wrapped in smoke. It is autumn, and now the days are brittle with change. Each afternoon is shorter than the last. At four o'clock the ice-cream truck comes lumbering through the leaves, its brass bell twingling along the street. No one hears it. Soon the air is filtered with dusk. At night she sits on the porch, waiting for him. Across the street she can hear the 7 p.m. final on the O'Neil's television.

VI

"O.K." Pringle said, his face half-hidden in shadow. "This is it, baby, this is it." We crouched in the shed out back of the American Legion Hall. We wondered if we all would make it back.

"Chambers, you and Dickerson are in the bushes next to my grandmother's house. Got the binoculars?"

Wint didn't say a word. He pushed the binoculars with his left hand. They hung from his belt on a string, and swung back and forth, slowly. We looked Pringle in the eyes. His face was expressionless. It was growing darker by the minute.

"Let's get moving," Billings said.

"All right," Pringle interrupted. "It's Kunkel, me and Billings in the tree-house. She'll be out there in a minute."

"Hold it," Kunkel said. He studied the backs of his hands. "There. . .there ain't any windows in the tree-house, Frankie. How we goin' to look down on the porch?"

A hush fell over us. Everyone looked at Pringle. He leaned way back, thumbs hooked in his belt, and viciously spat out his chewing gum. Then he rocked back toward us and paused, eyebrows lifted way up on his forehead. He was cold.

"Boys," he said. "Boys, there are cracks in the floorboards."

We whirled around and looked at each other. Cracks in the floorboards! Pringle started off, moving slowly, and we followed in single file, not talking. By now it was completely dark.

VII

Autumn. They sit together on the porch, mute with youth. The moon has shattered into slivers across the lawn.

She watches them from the window of her house across the street, and her shadow falls in sharp, rigid angles against the wall. How long ago was it? He would come striding up the leaf-cluttered walk, a copy of Wordsworth under the long bony arm.

They would read to the guttural sound of a lawn sprinkler across the street. Beneath their feet, along the edges of the walk, the roses were already dying. But his arm was around her tightly, and they sat together through all the awful, shuddering time of change. . .Can bring back the hour of glory in the flower. . .Wordsworth? Or Bryon? Or perhaps always the porch across the street where the moon washed her face with silver and nothing changed. The old woman stands in her window, Alicia Pringle, watching the dust of her old, old beginning blow across the lawn and then down Varnum Street. She closes the blinds.

At precisely 8:10, Wint and I crept out of the bushes beside old Lady Pringle's house. It was time for our patrol. Wint walked up one side of the street and I took the other.

When we passed each other he would hiss "How's it looking?" out of the corner of his mouth.

"Pretty good. Pretty damn good." I would answer, looking up at the streetlight in order to avoid being noticed. The raid had now been on for 35 minutes. It was so quiet you could hear your watch ticking. Finally we crept back into the bushes, Wint dragging his binoculars along the ground behind him. We lay there for a minute.

"Hey Tom."

"Yeah, yeah, Wint."

"They doing anything yet?"

"How do I know? Can't tell anything from here."

"Sure wish we could get up in that tree-house."

"That's right, keep it up, Wint. That's how every raid gets wiped out. Some wise guy gets a bright idea, doesn't do what he's told. First thing you know, something goes wrong. Then."

I looked over at Wint. His head was bent, hair hanging in his face. He looked like he was about to cry. We got up together and ran for the tree-house.

"Hold it. Hold it, man," Wint said, grabbing my ankle from below.

"What?" I asked.

"Look over there, in the window," he said.

We hung against the moss-covered tree trunk and looked. There, across the street, was old Lady Pringle, standing at her window and watching them do it on the front porch!

What could we do? We couldn't give the signal—she'd see us in an instant.

"She's going to be over here in two minutes," Wint said.

"She's going to break that up so fast your head will spin! You think she wants her granddaughter doing that? Geez, they're done for!" He looked toward the porch with real awe.

Old Lady Pringle hadn't moved. She was still staring at them from the window. I studied the tree-house.

"How are we going to warn them?" I asked.

"Easy," he said. "When she starts down here we'll race for the tree-house. We'll be inside before she reaches the street, and she'll never see us."

I stared at him with wonder. Sure enough, the blinds snapped shut in Pringle's window. We tore into the tree house.

The others paid no attention to us at first. They were lying on their stomachs, looking through the cracks in the floorboards.

"What?" Frankie snapped.

"Your grandmother, Frankie. She saw 'em. She's on her way over here, she saw 'em. On the porch. She's going to smash your sister one!"

"Did she see you?" Frankie asked.

We stared at him, whitefaced.

"All right. Everybody just take it easy. She can't possibly know we're up here. Sit down. Don't make a sound."

We sat for ten minutes.

"You sure she saw them "

"Positive. She was looking right at 'em for a long time."

"I don't get it. I thought she'd be over here for sure, the way she is."

THE UNREPENTENT

by Michael Mewshaw

The sky is divided into blue squares by the grill on my cell window. I am on my back on the narrow iron cot. I am staring so hard at the little blue squares that they seem to rest flat against my eyes. The heavy cooling air comes through the grill. It is in little squares too. I swallow it in gulps.

It is summer, I think. The evening meal is done and my tin plate lies on the floor near the door. The roaches are at it now. I hear them scraping, fluttering, and fumbling to get what I have left them. In one minute, perhaps two, Ramon's song will start. I have come to like his song. At first, I did not. When they told me I was to die and put me here in this little box, the song angered me. But it is the same song every night and I have come to like it.

I wait every night for Ramon to begin. I know how many chords he will sound before he moans the first words. I know every word and wait expectantly for my favorite parts.

There! It starts now. The tune is low, slow, and full of melancholy. It makes me sad, but it is a good sadness. It reminds me of smoke, or soft covers, or a cool drink from a deep secret well. It reminds me of different things each night.

In truth, the song does not make much sense, but to me it is very sad and beautiful. It makes me relax before the padre comes; for he will come and I know it.

When the padre comes down the hall I will hear his heels click sharply against the concrete. Ramon will stop his song and only hum. But I know the words and they will stay in my mind. Padre is in the hall now. His heels are clicking against the concrete. He is murmuring to those in the other cells. He is calling them "my son." He will call me "my son." He is stopped before my cell. I can hear the guard jingling the keys. The door groans open. The padre steps into the patch of light coming through the open door. He is very thin and very young, but he calls me "my son." His face is gaunt and his upper lip is shaven dark and close. Little sweat droplets are there. He sweats always.

"Good evening, my son," he will say, or perhaps he has already said it. I will not, do not answer. I say nothing, for I am nothing. His prayer book is in the hand which he has folded against his chest. The other hand he lays on my shoulder.

"Tomorrow, my son, you know you will die."

"Yes."

"Yet you have made no confession."

"I made my confession to the police."

"And to God?"

"He already knows. Does He not?"

"Yes, my son, He knows."

There is silence for a moment.

"Do you believe in God, my son?" he asks, removing his hand from my shoulder. I am still lying down, looking at the little squares of blue which are fast becoming black.

"Yes," I answer.

"Then why do you not tell Him you are sorry for your sin "

"Because I am not. I would do it again."

The picture of me, standing over Rena and Juan as they lie in an embrace, floods my brain. I plunge the knife through Juan and into Rena. Blood spills over my hands. Her dark round eyes stare blankly at me. I would do it again, even now, or tomorrow with the noose around my neck.

"You will not repent, then?" asks the padre sadly.

"No."

His thin shoulders slump.

"My son, will you not kneel and pray a moment with me?"

"No."

"My son, my son," he breathes desperately.

Again there is silence, but this time it is longer. The padre is still beside my cot, but I have nearly forgotten him. I know, however, that I do not wish to repent or to pray. I killed Rena and Juan and I want that fact to remain - on my hands and on my soul. I do not want the sin to be forgiven for then it will no longer exist. I want Rena and Juan dead forever. So I say nothing because I am nothing, and because I am nothing I am something, which is me. But if I say

something then I am not me. I am the padre or God, and my sin is useless.

Presently the padre's hand is on me again. I am not asleep, yet not awake. I feel the thin hand but do not acknowledge it.

"My son," he groans and sweats, "I must go."

"Good."

"But I shall return in the morning. Pray." I do not answer.

The padre steps to the door, the keys jingle, the door groans once, then again, the keys jingle again, the heels click down the hall, and Ramon resumes his song. The little squares are black. There are no stars. I am stretched out on my bunk. My belly is empty. It laughs. The air is thick and black. I roll onto my side and draw my legs against my chest to form a circle, like a snake eating its tail. I am sorry. I know I am, yet I cannot be. To God I am sorry, but cannot repent my sin to man. But about these things I shall not think. I shall watch the wall and wait for the small squares to grow light, and listen as Ramon's song stops for the last time. But I know all the words, and they will stay in my mind.

The night will be quick, like a year. The

little squares grow brighter and brighter. The sky is golden. There will be and is clicking in the halls. There is much clicking. The padre is at my side.

"My son, it is the hour."

"Yes."

"Repent," he begs with sweat.

"No."

We walk down the hall. My heels make no sound for I have no shoes. Their shoes click madly.

The courtyard is bright and open. Above the walls the mountains jut with snow capped peaks. It is my first time outside in two months. I love it. My skin soaks in the air which is no longer in little squares. My eyes stalk the immense sky.

As I reach the scaffold the padre touches my hand. I shake my head, saying everything.

The ragged rope is around my neck. The padre is below, thin, bent like a stick over his prayer book, reading, sweating. Ramon and the others are at their windows watching me through little squares. There is no song except for the wind. But I know the words and they will stay in my mind. I gasp in all the air and all the sky and I scream, "Father, I shall not repent."

Thinking on Pigeons

*Pigeons have no particular dialectic.
Never has there been anything profound
Or metaphysical about pigeons,
But I have, upon occasion, seen
Them in the context of the world
Cut a blackened swath across the sky.*

by Peter M. Burtram

J. R. Salamanca is the author of *Lilith*, a best-seller, which is now being made into a motion picture. His preceding novel was entitled *The Lost Country*. Salamanca lives in suburban Maryland with his wife and family. Most of his time is now devoted to completing his latest novel.

BENOIT: How do you begin to write? Where does your motivation come from?

SALAMANCA: Well, as I started to say, probably first novels are written out of a sense of elan, or creative torment, or whatever leads anyone to any aesthetic discipline. First novels, as Hemingway said, you write the first book for yourself. All the other ones are written for somebody else. Then, of course, if you're fortunate enough or unfortunate enough to sell, then you change pretty much to a routine and you've got to keep writing to make a living. I suppose you would anyway, I don't know. Everyone is an artist of some kind until he's 20. But people go on with it for one reason or another, either as a profession or as a diversion.

B: Do you write on a schedule?

S: Absolutely have to. I think you have to. I'm probably the world's worst example of an orderly or organized writer because I don't really, particularly if you have children. With everything that that entails, it's awfully hard to, but you've got to organize yourself to some extent. I think you can have resting periods and loaf—loaf and invite your soul, as Whitman said, but you've got to keep at it.

B: Do you write with a typewriter?

S: Yes, I write everything with a typewriter except for little corrections.

B: What are some of the major difficulties encountered while writing a novel?

S: Oh, my God, there are so many! Well, of course, there's a constant difficulty—I don't think there's anyone who is a writer in the sense that he has a vision worthy of putting into a novel, which is a long and rather torturous form—I don't think there's

anyone that ever develops a technique adequate to that vision. So that in a sense you're learning technically all your life. Shaw said we're all amateurs. No one ever lives long enough to be anything else. Technically, suppose, you're never certain. You've simply got to adopt a point of view, a technique, and then, for better or for worse, pursue it and hope that it's adequate and appropriate to the subject. But that's a problem. I wrote a novel in the third person and found it very difficult, and the third person form I still find terribly complicated, terribly inadequate, and so simplified that you can't achieve what Henry James said was necessary in writing a novel—the reason that so often he wrote first person novels was this business of securing the greatest possible amount of consciousness about the relationships in the story that you have to tell. The first person point of view, of course, is much more sophisticated, much more intricate. But then you have the problem of portraying the intimate processes of other characters, particularly since, from the realistic point of view, the narrator in question can't possibly know them. So then the first person point of view won't do for the story. You have to have an omniscient point of view, and then you lose something in that kind of intensity and intimacy you get by being really involved with the person you have as narrator. You can, perhaps, use letter technique where you can be everybody or you can switch your point of view from one character to another. But the subject matter has to accord with this type of treatment, and often it doesn't. I find the first person point of view much better for most of the kind of stories I want to write, although I'm going to have to change that in the book I'm working on now. I'm going to just flit about and have many points of view.

B: Is a novel always technically predetermined?

S: There is such a delicate balance required. One thing you must preserve, I think, at all costs, is spontaneity and the vitality of an original vision. And you must always not only

be willing, but anxious to improvise—these are the moments when things come to life. All the great discoveries are happy accidents and you must be willing to capitalize on any fortunate accidents. You must encourage accidents. But these things don't happen, you see, they don't happen fortuitously. They must have the environment to grow in. A book has to have architecture, in my opinion, and it's got to have a very severe sense of form. If it doesn't, it's not organized. And art, of course, is the most highly organized manifestation of the human consciousness. But the architecture or the house only provides a home for the novel—a place for it to grow up in. Then all of the wonderful and complex and accidental things of growth occur in this home. Given this, and a sense of peace, discipline, a sense of well-being, then you can set about waiting for the things to happen that happen in houses: moments of joy, anxiety, birth, and all the spontaneous and improvisational things that are life of the book.

B: When did you first decide to become a writer?

S: I can't remember. I've always written things since I was a child. My mother is a writer. I was first of all an actor, and studied acting and scraped out a very vagabond existence as an actor for many years. But all that time I was writing a book. Then I went to Europe to study under the G. I. Bill. I came home and taught for a few years while I finished the book, and I was fortunate enough to sell it to the movies, which enabled me to write full time. And so I have been doing that every since.

B: How did college affect you? Was it important?

S: Well, college very nearly proved disastrous. It just about ruined totally my capacities for writing, just about destroyed my enthusiasm for literature.

B: Many writers, like Ernest Hemingway, never graduated from college but started writing in journalism. Is this good experience?

S: Well, you know, it depends almost entirely on the temperament of the writer. It

certainly stood the writers of the 30's in good stead, but then they had so different a kind of intellectual climate, and American literature was in such infancy then. The kind of writing they did, the kind of themes they used, in the first place were almost entirely social themes. Hemingway is a great exception to that, and has been disastrously misread and has led astray almost a whole generation of American writers, who thought he was an athlete. But the realistic social themes were beautifully suited to that kind of journalistic writing. But writers today are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their themes and treatment, so that it won't do any longer. You take John Updike, or John Cheever, or William Goyen, or any of the young writers today. They're anything but journalistic.

B: With yourself, did journalism have any influence?

S: I think it had an unfortunate one. I was taught for so long so many incorrect things about writing. At the time I was being educated, it was a terrible time really, if you wanted to be a writer, to grow up in the American university environment. Our models and the people who were celebrated at that time were people for whom I realize now all my natural equipment had total antipathy. The things that sports reporters can tell you about life didn't interest me. I wasted years. I don't think I would have ever written anything of value if I hadn't by happy accident gone to Europe. But the English intellectual life that was suddenly presented for me made me suddenly respond and I began to understand the nature of my own intellectual equipment, by reading and being allowed to enjoy, without shame or prejudice or a kind of inverted class snobbery that there was about American writers for so long.

B: Should the product of fiction be defined by the reviewer or by the critic, or by neither?

S: I don't think anybody should. There will always be as many opinions about a work of art as there are people to behold it. It is just as absurd to say that one man has the correct opinion about Ulysses as it is to say that one man has the correct configuration

of fingerprints. No one can be said to have the right opinion. The only real kind of absolute criterion that applies, and it's mysterious, is the one of taste. You don't really know what taste is, but after a while you learn to like what is excellent.

B: To whom is the writer responsible?

S: Well, that's a question that invites all sorts of vagabond answers. I suppose the mystical artist would say, to God, another would say, to himself, another type of man whom I would like much less would say, to society. But he might be right. I suppose he's responsible to his own vision of life. If you bring it to a didactic level, it can be embarrassing and sometimes tragic. E. M. Forster has said that if it came to a matter of principles, he hoped he would be loyal to his principles or his friends rather than his country. To whom is he responsible God knows! I suppose the best way of wrapping it up is to say that he is responsible to God in that one cannot be false to one's self. In the artist himself, in every man, there is a pattern—as I was talking about fingerprints a while ago—there is a pattern of vision or spirituality. It's almost that exact. This is the pattern of the unfolding of his spiritual life. This must be followed. It is, I suppose, what you're true to.

B: Why write?

S: I suppose one writes. . .I've never heard it more completely expressed than Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem about "Euclid Alone... It sums it up beautifully. . .how does it go?

"That geese gabble and hiss, but heroes seek relief out of dusty bondage into luminous air. . .and cease to ponder on themselves the while they stare at nothing intricately drawn nowhere in shapes of shifting lineage."

I suppose it's a defense against chaos, against nothingness, and this defends you against all the things that terrify you. It makes patterns and gives you a sense of comfort. But I deplore the fact that writers today are fashionable and celebrated simply because they take a passionate social stand. Everyone takes passionate social stands, but that doesn't make them artists. It's no guarantee

that their work is worth reading. Let's suppose that the individual doesn't enjoy this chaotic condition of society. It should not be an opportunity for an aesthete, because the opportunity for an aesthete should be disorder not in the social sense but in the spiritual sense. And God knows, that will always prevail.

B: Assuming that there are two main types of unity, the dramatic or the poetic, which do you chose to employ?

S: I think the perfect book combines them both. Just as the perfect woman is both physically beautiful and spiritually beautiful, well organized—she can cook, she can play games, she can make love, she can entertain. A perfect book is perfect on all levels. And it would be a profound satisfaction to me if I could write a book so well organized that it could perfectly embody a metaphysical point of view, a spiritual point of view, and could do it in beautiful, well composed, and enduring prose. It should have a quality of song about it—be lyrical in the sense that the great works of art are. I don't suppose there's been a discussion of literature in which the term "objective correlative" hasn't some time or another come up, but it's a good one. There's got to be everything there. It's got to be organized, but only a really profound and passionate idea is worth organizing, otherwise you get something that's simply ornamental or decorative. You see, I would consider it foolish to say I'm going to sit down and write a lyrical novel, or I'm going to write an intellectual novel. It is necessary to decide on a technique, however, as, say, Huxley decided when he wrote *Point, Counter-Point*. I'm going to write a contra-puntal novel, but you mustn't let the idea of technique run away with you.

B: In your last novel *Lilith* you show an interest in Jungian psychology. Why is he important?

S: Well, I consider Jung one of the great thinkers. He had a far more universal kind of vision than the ordinary psychologist. This puts him in historical disfavor by a lot of people who complained about his mystique. I think he was a really profound writer, and,

in his best writings, a very simple writer. I find his ideas more constantly exciting and never so exclusive or clinical as the other psychologists. The reason that he appears so often in *Lilith* is because the subject of the book was mental illness, and it was expedient and economical to use Jungian ideas, both in terms of the plot and the metaphysical context of the book.

B: Freud felt that, as a culture, we place too many restraints on the individual and thus contribute to increased mental illness. How is his idea germinal to *Lilith*?

S: Well, it's of course relevant, but this is a dangerous idea, you know, and inspires an awful lot of bad poetry. Of course, society puts restraints on the individual. And of course one of the enduring problems of civilized man is the fact that he makes a social contract which is going to aggregate some of his instincts and passions. This is the problem of organizing anything. It isn't so much that—well, it's partly that—not the idea so much of restraint of society, as the fraudulence of society. So much that is fraudulent and perhaps even evil is sanctioned, and is even institutionalized in the name of social progress. And this, you see, is what is disconcerting, disastrous to so many people. A person, I think, can learn to accept frightening degrees of restraint, of training, of self-discipline, so long as they believe in the validity of the compromise. But when an important passionate part of their nature is compromised for a fraudulent or a frivolous idea, this is where you begin to get real disaster, real rebellion, and real disorder. This was more the idea that applied to this particular character in this particular situation.

B: Is Vincent Bruce peculiarly American in his romanticism and in his sentimental knighthood?

S: Well, I don't know whether he is or not. I would shudder to think so, but he may be. I suppose there was a point at which I had decided about that, or decided a specific symbolic role for him, as it were, but then of

course, good characters in fully conceived books, like your Freudian people a minute ago, will never submit to that kind of social restraint or aesthetic restraint. They break loose, they go mad! There's a wonderful poem of Yeats you may know called "The Circus Animals' Desertion." This is one of the most informative lessons in writing I know of. The circus animals desert him. He's got them all nicely lined up for his little charade. He's writing a play. Suddenly he says,

"Player and painted stage took all my love,
And not those things that they were emblems
of."

That is, they became real people. A man so transcends an idea, or an ideal, that it makes it seem shabby, because an ideal is such a minimal part of man's nature. Bad books are full of ideas and ideals. Good books are full of people that may now have an idea in them. A character can obsess you if you're writing well. He can really obsess you, and become something you never dreamed of. He can step out of his symbolic role altogether, and transcend it, then the book really gets exciting. Then you know you're really writing a book and can't stop. This is what happens when I spoke about the architecture. There must be a house. When you've got the house, that's the symbology of the book. But then when the book begins to live and grow, and real people get born and start moving around, and pushing the furniture around the room, rearranging that house, that's when the book really comes to life. There's life in the house you built. That's when the book gets exciting. So, you see, whether Vincent ever really transcends this symbolic role that I may or may not have appointed him to fill, I don't know. I don't know whether he represents America, or what he represents, but if I did know, I wouldn't tell, anyway. But it is perfectly conceivable, and satisfactory to me that you should think so. I think he represents probably, as far as most people are concerned, a type of American, but to assign him a definite role, it's hard to say. I wouldn't admit it anyway.

IN THE LAND OF THE DARKSOME CLOUD

by Michael Gura

*In the land of the darksome cloud
that never bears rain,
where all heads are lowered,
but not in pain,
we are too, shall we say, too contented
in serenity.*

*Now the sun and moon have fled,
and ash chokes the tree;
even the rats we brought are gone —
still we remain.
Unperturbed, we gaze upon
an earth gone insane,
patiently waiting
for rain.*

*Twenty years' sailing
over the main:
out, out of the black pit mines
we came,
out of the berry-pickers' lines,
whole and lame,
out of cruel confines of brick
we came.*

*Some grew strangely sick
and died:
blue as the flashing teeth of water
grinding at every side.
Sometimes the breeze did not stir
for a week from its bed,
but slept on white pillows
overhead.*

*Usually the ash flows
like a silent tide
creeping inland
at every side.
But sometimes it hangs, like beads of sand,
motionless over the ruined land.*

*For fifty years we lived in Eden,
supremely contented.
We ate of the bulbous fruit of Heaven,
and all extreme of feeling fled,
as though by some Pandora released —
And since then the ash has ever softly sifted
about a pack of zombies, alive, but deceased.*



Milly with her two children came straggling through the door, followed by Mr. Crapwell, toting the luggage. Mrs. Crapwell embraced her daughter and kissed the older boy and fondled, and googooed, wide-eyed stared at, and cuddled the younger.

Tear-strained voices shouted greetings while the older boy nervously romped: "Milly arrive?" Jean cried coming through the door a half hour later, her husband trailing behind carrying their baby.

"Boy, your baby's fat as mine!"

"Should have seen her when she was born! Just a ball of fat. . .!"

"We thought she was going to ask them to take her back, she was so disappointed," Mrs. Crapwell bubbled, laughing.

Ebullience ran high.

Telling of the trip, the airplane ride, the running for the jet: "Why do they have to put those damn jets fifteen million miles from the terminal I coulda walked home the distance I had to walk to the plane almost and with this one," Milly said, pointing to her older child, "he only weighs about fifty pounds and we got there just as the plane was ready to leave our car had a flat going in and George had to get a lift in for us from this man who was very nice he brought us all the way into the airport and even offered to help carry the luggage and we got there just as the plane was ready to take off they were announcing our flight so we rush out there with the attendants yelling for us to hurry and George was already carrying a suitcase and my overnight case and I had the baby and then Georgie couldn't keep up so George had to put him on his shoulder and run with him I don't see how he did it I can hardly lift him any longer and we just made the plane they almost took off with George the stewardess was asking him for his ticket I never did get to say good-bye to him as they rushed him off so fast when they found he wasn't going O! it was a mess!"

Two more arrived to greet the homecomer. Doris with her pulling child and bumbling husband came in, she shouting greetings, he mumbling hellos, sucking on his pipe and struggling for breath through his clogged nasal passages.

"O! you're fixing your hair different!"

"Oh that's one thing, I want you to fix my hair while I'm home; I went to a shop in California and did they botch it up!"

"Want some coffee?"

"Boy Georgie sure is getting big!"

"You should see little Charles!"

"Oh yes where is he?"

"He's upstairs sleeping now."

"Pooped out from his trip, not used to so much excitement, poor little fellow."

"How long you going to stay?"

"I can't say yet. Until George gets us a new house in Nebraska."

"She just got here, you trying to get rid of her already?"

Jean's husband, Larry, came in from the living-room with their baby girl, and leaned against the refrigerator, Milly looked at him with excited eyes of greeting, and he looked abashed, as he could never cope with an emotional situation, not even a reunion.

"How are you Larry?" she asked very friendly.

"Fine, how are you?" He looked at her—finely shaped, a fulsome, firm bust—like a panting fan longing to seduce his favorite movie queen.

"Georgie!" she shouted in to her son, still running about excitedly, now quite red and overheated, perspiring. "George, do you know who this is?"

"Unca Warry."

"He can't pronounce his l's yet," she needlessly explained.

"Do you know what he is?" Jean asked the boy.

He looked at her as though not comprehending, obviously disconcerted by the several pairs of eyes focused upon him. He squirmed about.

"He's a fireman!" his mother informed him.

"Uncle Larry's a fireman!"

The boy appeared not to believe them. He looked wide-eyed at his uncle, who, with avuncular delight in being the object of attention, knelt down and encouraged the boy, asserting in a quiet, firm voice that he was a fireman, as though imparting something

sacred. Everyone looked on, smiling, offering complementary remarks.

The ebullience persisted. A combination of lightness of speech, head, and thought, kindly manner between one and all, endless interest, even in thrice reiterated stories, and the exchanging of details of everyday life that were of inordinate interest and delight to the participants. And yet another couple arrived.

Short statured, bulbous in pregnancy, Annie came in with her husband, Arnold, who nervously fingered his mustache as he, like Larry, had difficulty coping with such situations. He greeted his sister upon her return, then went into the living room to read through several Life magazines. He was a speed reader. Annie stayed in the kitchen with the rest, drinking coffee and talking loudly, trying to drown out the other voices. Dissonance rose in a harmony of good will.

Mr. Crapwell came through the kitchen.

"How was California?" he yelled, affecting gaiety.

Everyone stared at him as though a pariah. Annie screwed up her mouth in obvious disapproval and made a low comment for Doris' approval. Mrs. Crapwell squinted her eyes and looked askance at him, decidedly censorious, perturbed because his question had come in the middle of her sentence. Her voice had reached a peak of irritating drone that signified a singular excitedness, mitigable only through continuous talking.

Mr. Crapwell seemed insouciant to the evident ill will he caused. Milly answered him softly, giving what general information about California she thought would suffice him.

"How long you going to stay?" he asked when she was through.

"Christ! Give the girl a breather before you start sending her back," Mrs. Crapwell snarled.

"Jesus God, I was only asking."

"Until George can get us a new place in Nebraska, he's stationed there now," Milly answered him, quietly, with restraint. It was obvious she didn't want to talk to him; he sensed it and left.

Askance glances of annoyance and disgust followed him from the room.

But not even he could still the warm cheer erupting through the gathering volcanos of wambling high elation, and conversation continued for many hours.

Jean said to her baby when feeding her a cookie, which the baby smeared everywhere joyfully: "Your mouth looks like a duck's behind!" and everyone laughed uproariously.

When offered coffee, Arnold came in from the living-room to tell of Doris' most recent faux pas. She had invited everyone out to her new house for the afternoon, and when she went to make coffee she said, "I think I must have bought the wrong kind of coffee for my maker." She showed them the contents of the package—she had a bag of coffee beans, now knowing enough to have the stuff ground. Everyone laughed delightedly and Doris blushed.

Annie told about her fears of delivery; she was due in two or three weeks. She generated an avalanche of misty female feeling of subliminal love brindled with memory of honored physical pain.

From Mrs. Crapwell down to the youngest, Doris, they each recounted their own experience from the first vaginal smear to the fear they might need forceps: comparing pelvic measurements and doctors' routine examinations.

The air was pregnant with a pulpy fruited bliss.

It lapsed a moment in sweet smiles, then swelled again from things puerperal to christenings. Milly had decided to have Charles baptized while she was home. Who was going to be godfather, who godmother? The announcement made everyone happy; opinions were shouted and all were listened to.

Later Milly described her house in San Diego and told various humorous misadventures concerning Georgie, who looked on, somewhat dazed by hearing his name mentioned so often, and having everyone, after each anecdote, tease him, asking: is that right; did you do that; my, my young man, we know—endlessly.

They laughed together like Eliot's "irresponsible foetus," a jellied exultancy that coalesced into one tear-abstained, dewy-eyed, strained, excited-voiced happiness at reunion.

The next day, Doris and her husband and child visited, and Annie came over because she was off from work and was home alone.

"Where's Dad?" Doris asked.

"He's gone to see about a job."

"Really, what kind?"

Mrs. Crapwell hesitated a moment before answering.

"Nightwatchman," she finally said.

"Watchman?" cried Milly, incredulous. "What could he protect? He couldn't protect himself."

"Oh, let him alone when he's trying to do something. He can't get something he's qualified for because of his handicap," Mrs. Crapwell defended weakly.

* * * * *

Two weeks later, George sent a letter telling Milly he had a house rented and enclosed in the letter her flight instructions. The letter came Monday and the flight was on Wednesday.

Doris came over to take Milly to the airport. They didn't trust Mr. Crapwell to drive as he had been drinking all morning and was upstairs sleeping it off.

"Leave it to him to get potted on the day you have to leave," Mrs. Crapwell said, "Though I don't trust him driving even when he's stone sober."

Mrs. Crapwell was going to stay home to babysit Doris' child, but they persuaded her to go. Milly sat in the front seat, holding Doris' child, and Mrs. Crapwell sat in the back, holding Charles and trying to keep Georgie out of trouble.

They had to wait an hour for their flight. They talked and tried to keep Georgie entertained. They conjectured on how it would be in Nebraska, especially with winter coming on, and Mrs. Crapwell lamented to Georgie:

"Poor darling you move so often you don't even know where your home is, do you." And she persuaded him to give Grandma a kiss.

"Yes," said Milly dryly, trying to keep back her emotions over parting. "Like Annie says, we're like berry pickers following the crop. Only we don't mind picking berries for fifteen thousand a year, and as soon as Georgie comes of age we're going to get him a bucket too. But now it's off to Nebraska for the corn crop, you tell her."

"Oh, she just likes to be snide," Mrs. Crapwell whined. "She hates to think any one's making better than Arnold."

Their flight was called. Mrs. Crapwell could not hold back what she had managed to withhold when Milly had arrived. Her eyes glittered and a liquid veil covered the

openings; this slipped from the orbs and slid down her cheeks, following the rivulets of wrinkles. Doris laughed at her mother's sentimentality, but watching her tears and the fierce way she hugged Georgie and Milly and kissed Charles she was moved also and had trouble checking her tears.

Mrs. Crapwell followed them out to the gate, carrying Charles, saying goodbye to him over and over again in a chanting tone of voice, and asking Georgie would he miss Grandma.

At the gate she managed to kiss Georgie three more times before he hurried through. He was anxious to get on the "airplane in the sky," as he termed all aircraft whether airborne or not.

"Be careful," Mrs. Crapwell meaninglessly cried after them.

"Do you expect her to drive the plane," Doris remarked, and laughed from her tight throat.

"And write and tell me you got home safe."

Milly turned around and told Georgie to wave. Finally realizing that he was leaving Grandma for good, he waved vigorously and yelled, "Bye Mimi," as he called her, and "Bye Jean," to Doris, because he was unable to pronounce her name. Milly had him throw Grandma a kiss, and Mrs. Crapwell reciprocated and yelled,

"Goodbye sweetheart."

As Milly looked back, she felt a dewy sadness pushing at the back of her eyes and constricting her throat.

They couldn't stay to watch the plane take off, it was being delayed two hours. Back in the car, on the way home, Mrs. Crapwell was still sad, and her sadness forced her to observe again:

"I wish they'd settle down, all this traveling around isn't good for the babies. Poor Georgie is so confused he doesn't know where his home is. George might be making good money, but. . ."

They were home, and she saw that Mr. Crapwell's car was gone.

"Well! I see the old man has hightailed it out to the bar again. He always wants to see the grandchildren he says yet he can't stay sober to see them off when they do come to visit.

"The slob," Mrs. Crapwell finished with bitter anger.

THE FATES SHOULD HAVE WARNED US

by Bo Jennings

*When as lovers we seek-out the solitude
of cast shadows
here along the river bank,
why must we call our seclusion complete
only when the gloom is so silent
as to hide even each from the other;
why is it only then
that our voices breathe the incense of love
and our limbs can relieve the heavy cries of desires
which our bodies so often have asked?*

*At some time in our lives
(I would not ask when)
we have created a glare so harsh and foreboding
that we can only seek blindly to extinguish
it in the dim-lit labyrinths of useless union.
So fondly I remember
the first years of our meeting—
What gaiety, what freedom we shared!
even on the isle of our birth—
(do you remember it yet?)*

*Somewhere
the Fates should have warned us
against unrewarding love.*

FROM THE WINDOW

by Kay Grimes

*From the window, only trees,
A cave of trees,
Dark, forbidding;
No bison on its sides
To worship the gods of the hunt;
Only choking walls
Of garish green.*

*From a prison just as lonely
Rapunzel let down
Her golden hair.
I have dark locks,
Too short to reach the ground:
I cannot escape
Rapunzel's way.*

An unfortunate although perhaps inevitable aspect of painting is the need for a liaison man between the picture and the viewer. This man is generally known as a critic although any painter to whom the critic has given a bad review will gladly volunteer any number of suitable synonyms. In our time this man functions variously as interpreter, sage, aesthete, wag, evangelist, seer, proselytizer, yes-man, clown, idiot, and god. All this, however, is well known. The purpose of this essay is to determine the origin of art criticism in order to understand how it has affected contemporary criticism and one painter, in particular.

One widely held idea is that the first critic was a sickly member of a Paleolithic tribe who could not take part in the bison hunts. Hanging around the cave from day to day, he would amuse himself by toying with ideas about the wall paintings. It follows that he related some of these ideas to the other cavemen, carefully selecting a propitious time. To amuse the little fellow and to get him off their backs, some influential cavers had him appointed Director of General of Tribal Art Analysis. This theory has its weaknesses though.

My contention is that art criticism evolved between the end of the Dark Ages and the beginning of the High Renaissance. Consider: reason and individuality were on the upswing, and any number of men were painting in any number of manners. And one must not forget that alchemy, sorcery and black magic were rapidly losing popularity. Thus I suggest that the first critic was a medium (the fellow who communicates with the dead in a seance) who found business rather bad—in fact, paltry—and realized that he would have to find another source of income. The thought of any sort of labor was a veritable nightmare and would not allow him to enjoy the plush existence he loved so well. But one extraordinary prospect presented itself; Art was a virgin field that offered lucrative rewards for the proper farmer. And it must be pointed out that he was not above this form of labor.

Of course the transition from sorcery to art criticism was easy. The fellow hired out the local Gutenberg printing press and quickly turned out an edition of books giving all the answers as to who were the best painters and which the best paintings. Then he explained why this or that was the best (the print became blurred here; but, after all, this was a rudimentary printing press as our critic hastily suggested). The work was an instantaneous best-seller and jostled with Petrarch's Sonnets and Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography for top position in the best-seller lists. The success of the book may be attributed to the desires to keep up with the Medicis, as well as to that Eulenspiegelian Law which is based on the eternal existence of human fatuity: You can fool some of the people all of the time, etc.

If one considers some of the contemporary manifestations of criticism as a continuation or reflection of the past, then my theory is given additional weight. Let us examine what might be considered a continuation of this tradition.

One modern artist, Adolph Gottlieb, by name, enjoys painting canvases that consist of a ball over a bunch of scrawls, similar to the way a child paints the sun over the earth. Mr. Gottlieb enjoys thinking of these things as "contrasting versions of the same image" which is why he enjoys calling them "bursts"—I guess. And he also enjoys thinking that he and some of the other kids in the abstract expressionist gang would like to say to us: "We despise you. We don't want you to like us or our art . . . there happen to be a few rich people who are cultivated enough to buy my pictures." So there.

Obviously Mr. Gottlieb needs some help and he gets it in superabundance from, of all people, the critics. The most widely held attitude claims that the ball and scrawl paintings are "grandly conceived statements of dualism. . . . [which express] the paradox of civilized man." [The express] "any duality you can think of. . . male and female, action and inaction, thought and feeling." A less enterprising view is that Gottlieb's work is

"just there, with a painterly integrity that has a force of its own."

(This all sounds real good until one realizes that these cosmic implications and this "painterly integrity" are all to be found in the nonrepresentational (Gottlieb's word) ball and some scrawls.) By these standards every watercolor turned out by a third grade child is "high art" and just loaded with intimations of great philosophical portent. For Mr. Gottlieb's art is childlike or childish if you wish. And it must be pointed out that not even Mr. Gottlieb is so presumptuous as to regard his work in this manner.

Also a question is propounded: How far can one go with this strain of strained critical straining? For instance one might read into a painting of the Stripe School (which generally consists of a number of nonrepresentational but nice stripes painted from one end of a canvas to another) [that it is] an attempt to give logical form and hence reason and stability to a helter-skelter, mumble-jumble world through the use of the straight and narrow. Or it is a cosmic implication that there is a new brand of toothpaste. Or barber poles should be straightened.

If one overlooks these analogies - in much

the same way that a person who is at a formal dinner and has a running nose would like to overlook the fact that he has no handkerchief, then this brand of criticism is great. For the rest of us (Gottlieb included), this attitude leaves a bit to be desired. And, for me, it represents the contemporary continuation of that old blackly magical tradition.

One must point out, however, that not all contemporary art is bad. Much of it could hold its own with the art of any age. Nor is every abstract expressionist painting the result of a child's play. Now and again one encounters a work of the stature of Jackson Pollack's Autumn Rhythm - a painting for which a word such as "masterpiece" has been coined. And obviously not all contemporary art criticism follows my theoretical tradition.

But as to the future of the Gottliebean brand of art and the "fashionable" critical attitude it has evoked, we might take a look at another of Gottlieb's brainchildren. Speaking of modern American painting and abstract expressionism in particular, he states that "we have broken through the crust of mediocrity," a statement which engenders the question: How much further must we drop before we hit bottom?

AN EXPERIENCE

by Peter M. Burtram

*Strolling, rather aimlessly, the other night
I reflected on a poem, by Wordsworth, portraying the sublime,
Man's awed fear, and reverent insignificance
In the shadows of nature's massive weight,
And thought I could almost conjure, in my imaginations way,
The same man, boat, and mountain, and feel the sight the same.*

*The mountain, it loomed huge, perhaps as if to fall
Across the spot where the man was, leaving nothing at all,
And Panic winked his icy eye at me.
My imagination recoiled, backward to a new perspective,
And saw that the mountain was being pushed by a monstrous body mass,
The earth, and another step back I took,
And saw the earth being flung, an insignificant speck,
Among a bewildering confusion of fiery orbs and burnt globes of ash,
And my imagination fled, till it suddenly coalesced
Into an ever diminishing point,
In the center of expanding space,
The product of these multiple motions
And the compendium of ethereal time,
And the sublime slipped away from my modern mind.*

TRIBUTE

by Patricia Leist

*a hard stone
long untouched by water
found a spring
in this soul.*

for a Poet

*Sound of husky prayer
blown across too much time —
 in a search always
 for the Caring Ones —
led to few.
And of those few,
fewer of the Same Care.*

*But one found lately,
speaking those lusty tones
husky with the necessary
(or what seems necessary) tear
that finally consumes
bringing down to limp
damp form the whole of that dear soul
 that leans forward to hear
 that exudes the empathy of
 and the sympathy of . . .*

*One found lately
that listens to the same dream
and hears the unspoken undercurrents*

*as I spoke of a dream,
 and knew his,
staring into the floor, a door
open to vision,
and daring to occasion
the line and eye of a face
for which I had only to offer
ensuing silences.*



CHILDREN

PHOTOS BY DORAN LEVY



THE FROGS

by Peter B. Holley

One day frogs began coming out of my basement. Oh, I knew that there had been some down there—I noticed them the day that I first discovered that the plumbing was beginning to leak a little, but I thought, what the hell, what's a couple of frogs, and immediately forgot all about them. But frogs are like snakes or dung beetles and all that—once they get a hold in a basement, if something isn't done to break it, they engender in the darkness and multiply until they all but take over the place, especially if the plumbing is at all leaky. I guess that's exactly what happened in mine. One day there were a few, harmless, almost cute little frogs hopping around on the basement floor, scurrying away into damp corners, out of sight, whenever I turned on the light and went down for something, and the next day they had reached such a state that they were covering the stairs and piling up against the door until they caused it to break in simply from the pressure of the combined weight of their bodies, and then they came—tumbling, and hopping, and slithering all over each other like a living flood of green slime, right into the middle of my livingroom.

I didn't know what to do. They were chirping and croaking, and sitting on the lamps and on the chairs and running up and down the walls—flying through the air like a bunch of locusts. I couldn't just keep on standing there up to my knees in frogs, and the way they kept gushing out of the basement it wouldn't have been long until I would have been up to my neck in them, so I began grabbing them by handfuls and throwing them back into the doorway as fast as I could. Closing my eyes against the sight of this enormity and holding my breath as well as I could to block out the swamp-like smell of decay that filled the room I pitched and kicked and heaved their soft bodies, driving them back toward the basement, screaming all the while at the top of my lungs to drown out the sound of their gibbering. Before I knew it they had retreated back down the stairs into the dark. Quickly I closed what was left of the door and began piling furniture from my living room in front of it, hoping that would hold them back

until I could calmly reason things out and make up my mind what to do.

I had just got back from washing off the slime and filth from my body in the shower that the frogs had covered me with in the brief time that they had been in the living room, and was buttoning on a clean, freshly-starched shirt—beginning to feel more like myself once again—when the doorbell rang.

Who could that be? I thought wildly. Here I've just this minute got rid of all those nasty frogs and not even had time to tidy up the room after them, or get rid of that horrible smell, and here my doorbell starts ringing away like the braying of the hounds of hell.

"Just a moment," I yelled sharply at the door, "Can't you be patient a moment until I've dressed properly for answering the door?" I finished tying my neck tie, straightening the knot and smoothing down my collar, and struggled into my coat, glancing into the mirror to make sure nothing was out of place. Then I opened the door just the tiniest crack so whoever was outside could not look into my house and see the condition my livingroom was in.

"Oh, hello, Father," I said, smilingly—trying to look as if I had never even heard of a frog before, let alone having a basement full of them. "I thought it might be you." He always seemed to show up right at the wrong time.

"You knew damn well it would be me, Sonny," he said, huffing himself up and thrusting out his chest so that the brass buttons on his uniform jiggled and strained as if they were going to pop right off his coat. He flexed his arm, showing me his muscle, moving aside a gold braided epaulet so that I could feel it—it was bigger and harder than mine had ever been.

"Your daddy is as strong and spry as he ever was. You can ignore him all you want, forget all about him living alone up in his poor apartment with only his memories and his pictures of your mother, dead these many years, but you don't have to worry about his forgetting about you—his son, his baby. No, no matter how long you ignore him—for how

many years—he'll always be strong enough to come around when he is needed, like he always has, to stop in and see how his son is doing, and help him out of any jams he might get into."

"Oh, I know that, sir," I said, feigning a nonchalance I certainly didn't feel. "What . . . ah, what brings you here today? You. . . you didn't hear about me being in any kind of a jam? It's much too soon. . . er, ah. . . I'm much too sound for that. No...ha, ha... no jams today."

"I'm glad to hear it. . . glad to hear it. You don't know how much it pleases me to hear it," he said, trying to peek around me into the room. "No, I'm here selling tickets for the policeman's ball, today. I may be retired from active duty, but the boys down at the station house know that I'm still on the job, nevertheless, so they let me sell the tickets for the commission on them. Got to have money to eat you know, and a man who does not work will not get. And a bird in the hand is always better than two in the bush, so I took this job until I can get two birds in hand—I'm loyal, naturally, but. . . ha, ha,. . . we don't hide our lights under bushels, do we son?"

"No, sir. We sure. . . ha, ha. . . don't."

"Loyal to others, but true to ourselves."

"Yes, sir."

"Clean of body as well as mind."

"Yes, sir."

"What's that?"

"Yes, sir. Clean of b. . ."

"Stop agreeing with me." He was livid with rage and pointing a trembling finger at the bottom of the door. "Simply tell your father exactly what that thing is there at your feet."

"That? Oh that's nothing at all. Just a frog." How did he get there? I thought that I had got them all back into the basement. Reaching out with my foot I began to drag him back into the house, but before I could, father swooped down and caught it in his hand. Glancing back and forth over his shoulder, up and down the street to make sure that none of the neighbors were watching, and lowering his voice to a whisper he hissed between his teeth.

"A frog? Nothing? You call a frog

nothing? A sickening, disgusting frog hops right out of your front door onto the public street, for all the world to see, and you call it nothing?"

My hands began to get sweaty from my nervousness. I wished I could wash them, but that was impossible, so I wiped them on a fresh handkerchief that I carried for that purpose. I didn't like to get it dirty and have to put it back in my pocket either, but it was still better than having my hands feel sticky and all.

"I'm sor. . ."

"God! A frog in my own son's house. The flesh of my flesh, and the blood of my blood, and an evil, corrupted, revolting toad. . ."

"It was a frog," I said defensively.

". . . frog, then—it's only a matter of degree. A frog, in the middle of the day, a slimy frog. . . ugh. . . I shudder to even think about it." His face had turned beet red, and his body shook so hard that all of the medals on his chest jangled and clanked, and his double chin and the fat on his neck quivered over his high, stiff collar. He began shaking a stern forefinger in my face.

"What kind of a person are you? What kind of a. . . a monster did your mother, bless her soul, and I raise? Yes, hang your head—you ought to, normal people just don't have frogs at their feet. Your mother would turn over in her grave if she knew this, and I can hardly speak for shame. But I'll take this frog, and I'll get rid of it. You can count on your father for that. And we'll both forget all about it. Never, though, never do I want to hear anything about you and frogs again."

"But. . ."

"No more—it's forgotten—you'll just have to contain yourself. Now. . . how about a ticket to the policeman's ball? It's good clean fun." He wrapped the frog in a large piece of paper and stuffed it into one of his pockets, at the same time withdrawing a book of tickets from another.

"Thank you, sir. No. . . no, one will be quite enough."

"Well, if you're sure." He replaced the book, putting it in the same pocket that he had put the frog in, but withdrew it quickly when he realized his error, and put it in

another. "Now don't forget, we've forgotten all about that. . .that thing."

"Yes, sir," I answered, thinking about the mass of wiggling, writhing frogs that were even now heaping up against the basement door again, ready to burst loose.

I watched father recede down the long street in the direction of his apartment until he was almost invisible, then I closed the door and went back into the house. Immediately I saw where I had made the mistake that had allowed father to glimpse, as it were, a fragment of my situation. I had assumed, when I didn't see any more of the frogs at my feet or hopping around on the floor, that I had pushed all of them back into the basement, but the sneaky devils in an almost obsessive attempt to alude me had hidden in the corners, under the rug, and any other place that they could find to hide from my sight, and as soon as I answered the doorbell they had come out and began froliccing around the livingroom behind my back. It certainly was a good thing that father had not wanted to come inside the house, but then why should he? He could never imagine that just because he found one frog in his son's house that it could be anything but a minor aberration—an isolated exception that could happen to anyone who wasn't paying quite full attention to the state of his house. That was why he was so willing to forget all about it. But, while you could forget about one frog easily, you had to do something about a whole basement full.

There was no two ways about it—I had to get rid of them. I had to get them out of the basement and out of the house before there was no room left in it for me. And I had to do it without father finding out about it and without ruining my good name in the neighborhood.

While I was wondering what to do, I went around the room ferreting into all the corners and under all the furniture gathering the remaining frogs into my hands. Actually they weren't as bad as all that—they were really sort of cute with their roly-poly bodies and all, and it was really a sort of pleasure to hold them in your hands, feeling their warmth, and squeezing them slightly until they seemed to lump together into a single mass. They

might even make nice pets—you could keep them tucked away somewhere, and take them out when you wanted to see them and play with them and roll them around on the floor. But they were so dirty. And filthy—even now my hands were so slimy and sticky that I could almost scream. And what would father say? Normal people just don't sit in their houses and play with frogs. Frogs belong in swamps, and fens—far away from people, where it's clean and nice—certainly not in one's own house. I flung the dirty things away from me, smashing them against the wall. How could I have ever allowed them to get started in the basement? And how could I have let the plumbing go right on leaking so they could breed and generate in the damp darkness down there. Other people don't let their plumbing get in such a sorry condition. They have decent plumbing, and even if it does leak a little they never get any frogs in their basements, and never, never in the numbers that were in mine. What would happen if the neighbors ever found out? I would never be allowed to continue living in a clean, decent community like this.

I picked up the bodies of the frogs from the floor next to the wall where I had thrown them, wrapping them up in a piece of paper, and cleaning the mess from the wall until no one, with even the sharpest eyes, would ever suspect that there had been a stain there, and carried them into the bathroom, where I flushed them down the toilet, watching them swirl about in the water until they were sucked down the wide-mouthed drain. I turned to the sink and began scrubbing my hands with my little brush, using plenty of soap and hot water.

"Damn the neighbors, anyway," I said to myself, "The self-righteous holier-than-thou bastards. They've all probably got more frogs in their basements than I'll ever have. Their basements are probably full of toads and dung beetles." I worked up a good lather on my hands, not forgetting the backs, and washed it off with the hot water, but they still felt sticky, and I could still smell just the slightest trace of that disgusting smell on my fingers and under my nails, so I began removing my clothes, hanging them neatly

on hangers and brushing out all of the wrinkles, and started the water running in the tub.

"Who are they to persecute me so when they could find much worse in their own basements if they would only look. People like them deserve to be tied and gagged and thrown into their own cellars and have rats and frogs crawling all over them until they come to realize what a shameful state they are in, and then let out only if they are actually contrite and beg forgiveness. Otherwise they should have to live in their own filth forever."

I could feel the cleansing action of the water instantly after I stepped into the tub and lowered my body gingerly—gasping at the heat.

Damn them, and damn my father, forever hanging around and sticking his nose into my business—sniffing out my indiscretions—and acting as if he were still on active duty—telling me how to behave all the time and demanding that I follow his example. He doesn't have to deal with my problems. He doesn't have frogs in his basement. He doesn't even have a basement—living way up in his apartment like he does. Forget them he says. Forget them? How do you forget a whole basement full of frogs. One or two is easy, but a basement full demands attention.

They were still there, of course, after I finished my bath, and, if anything, they were increasing their numbers steadily, because, although no more frogs had escaped into the livingroom, they were forcing the door open again by their intense pressure and were ready to overwhelm the defenses I had built up with the furniture. Quickly I pushed the door closed with all my strength, and stacked the remaining furniture in front of it.

"Something absolutely must be done to relieve the pressure," I thought to myself. "That door isn't going to hold out forever,

and I can't very well keep on living here without any place to sit down. I have to be realistic about the matter."

** ** ** ** **

I looked up from my desk, hidden from view of the main floor by several potted palms and some intricate lattice work, and watched my waiters carry heaping trays of steaming food from the kitchen to the tables of the customers. I could hear the oohs and aahs of the guests as they removed the morsals from the trays and savored them, smacking their lips noisily, and demanding more. Their contented laughter and table chatter filled the air as they relaxed and enjoyed their meals in the continental atmosphere of the large diningroom, which had been my livingroom before I had the house remodeled into a restaurant.

Even my father was happy now and quite satisfied for he could still watch out for me in his official position as major-domo and reject anyone who spoke disparagingly of la spécialité: Frog Legs Meuniere.

At first I had personally taken charge of the cooking, but later I chose to retire to my desk in the corner, because, while I could easily find competent cooks, no one could keep a ledger as well as I. And, too, I liked to be able to keep my finger, so to speak, on the exact amount of money that I had saved away in the bank since I started my business—not to mention that it was much cleaner and nicer at my desk, with all my pencils and drawers and my pigeon holes than it had been in the kitchen.

And did my neighbors mind having one of the houses on the street turned into a French restaurant and all? On the contrary, as I had suspected from the first they became some of my best customers.

Sometimes I get a little anxious, though, when I think about what's going to happen in the basement if business ever slacks off.

ONCE LAST AUTUMN THE WIND WAS PUNGENT

*Once last Autumn the wind was pungent
with the fresh oversweetness of clean human hair.
But I was alone . . . my brown beach of back
a skittering-ground for lightlimbed crabs.*

*Look up, I thought, above the rippled grass,
into the hot wind, the cool, silent sea of night.
The wind was Gulf-Stream—what did it draw
from warmer waters? How cold my hands,
as thrust in their deep, warm wombs of pockets.*

*What comb was drawing through the weeping-willow;
its undulous sargasso was medusahead of motion.
Whose comb was grooming those might-grey strands;
I laughed, like the clack of cubed ice in a tumbler.*

*In that sensuous breath so much hotter than mine,
I spoke reason for relief, but heard the speech combed,
groomed to richer luster than words primped by me.
And the beach, it was alive with tiny red crabs,
pinching the brown sand with their miniature claws.*

by Michael Gura

About Clouds:

*A stretched pigeon's wing,
A peacock's tail albino across the sky,
Billowing white vapors
Tumult in a wild young wind.
You would become a thunderhead,
And awe the world with lightning,
And call the universe home.*

*But you are not any of these things.
You are a small young girl
Whom I want to love in my peculiar mode.*

*You are none of these things,
But you come closest to being a wild young wind.*

by Peter M. Burtram

Lilith, a novel by J. R. Salamanca, author of The Lost Country, was published in 1961. Since that time, it has received much popular, but little critical acclaim. There may be two reasons for this oversight. First, Mr. Salamanca allowed his novel to be published in a rather crass-looking paperback edition on the cover of which resounded the pornographic subtitle, "A novel of sexual obsession." Secondly, serious readers of "polite" literature (such as Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene) devote little time to the study of the contemporary American novel. Despite appearances and the tastes of scholars, however, Lilith is one of the most significant novels published in recent years.

A paper could be written on its narrator, Vincent Bruce, as a representative of the "American Adam." In ancient myth, Lilith was the first wife of Adam. James Joyce described her in this manner:

Then spoke young Stephan orgulous of mother Church that would cast him out of her bosom, of law of canons, of Lilith, patron of abortions, of bigness wrought by wind of seeds of brightness or by potency of vampires mouth to mouth or, as Virgilius saith, by the influence of the occident or by the reek of moonflowers or as she lie with a woman which her man has but lain with, effectum secuto or peradventure in her bath according to the opinions of Averroes and Moses Maimonides.

---Ulysses, pg. 389.

There are metaphorical suggestions throughout the novel which indicate that Lilith's name is as important to it as is the name Ulysses to Joyce's masterpiece. These same passages may indicate that Salamanca is also familiar with Joyce's treatment of the myth:

...we went instead to the orchards north of town, and in among the silent moon-drenched trees, in the darkness with its reek of fruit-tree sap, with a dog distantly lamenting our iniquity, and her whole body wet with the juice of rotting peaches, I purged myself of a fantasy which had harrowed me for months.

---Lilith, pg. 242.

It is not, however, within the scope of this article to attempt a detailed analysis of the Adamic Myth in the novel, or for that matter, to search for Joyce-like echoes. I wish, rather, to suggest the significance of Lilith: its moral and artistic integrity, and its relation to American literature in general. According to Harry Levin in The Power of Blackness, "American literature sprang from religious allegory. . .symbolism is the intrinsic mode of American writing." He quotes W. H. Auden:

Most American novels are parables; their settings, even when they pretend to be realistic, (are) symbolic settings for a timeless and unlocated (because internal) psychomachia.

Lilith follows in, and extends, this artistic tradition in American fiction. The religious allegory which Salamanca raises to the level of psychological symbol, creating a "timeless and unlocated (because internal) psychomachia," is that of the Temperate man in the Bower of Bliss. Lilith is not only the first wife of Adam, but in the religious-psychological allegory of the novel represents the figure of Acracia as she is found in the second book of Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene. In Spenser's allegory, Sir Guyon is the Faery Knight of Temperance. Guyon's strength as a moral figure lies in the avoidance of temptation, in which he is aided by the Palmer, or reason. The most significant threat to Guyon is what Spenser calls "foolhardice," foolish courage. He is often tempted, as a knight, to challenge powers of evil which it is beyond his strength to resist. With the help of the Palmer, he overcomes this weakness, and is able to destroy Acracia, the seducer of men, and her Bower of Bliss.

In Lilith, Vincent Bruce is the Guyon figure. His name, Vincent, means vincible, capable of being subdued. Like Sir Guyon, Vincent is inclined to "carnal concupiscence," he is mortal. However, he has no dark-robed figure of sanity to lead him safely through the insane asylum, Poplar Lodge, in which he assumes as a young man the position of supervisor and work therapist. Poplar Lodge becomes a Bower of Bliss where the Ids, or "appetites" of its patients are uncontrolled.

I put the car in gear and continued on up the driveway, carrying her back to the great dark mansion over which she reigned, with its sunken veranda, its glimmering golden fishes and its sea plants waving gently in the long tides of magic that flow forever through the fathoms of its shifting cellars.

---Lilith, pg. 231.

Vincent is foolish in an essential way. Unlike Guyon, he fails to accept his nature as a man. In a delusive search for perfection, Vincent attempts to cure Lilith, a beautiful and dangerous schizophrenic. Though a moral and sensible man, he lacks sufficient strength to either help or defeat her. He assumes his role as Knight of Poplar Lodge in good faith, but with bad judgement, committing the sin or self-delusion of "foolhardice," foolish courage. Mrs. Meagham, a therapist in the novel, warns him:

There are certain forms of activity which are incompatible with certain temperments—they are too exalted, perhaps, too disciplined, or too full of temptations for one's nature. And the person of real integrity will be honest enough to relinquish them, rather than making a mockery of his whole life, or deforming his nature by attempting to extend it too far.

---Lilith, pg. 154.

But Vincent, in his pride, attempts too much, refusing to recognize that he must tread the Golden Mean. He steps with "foolhardice" into a world of unchained desires, strange lusts and frightening fantasies, of insane or immoral (the relation between the two is another important aspect of the novel) delight. He falls in love with Lilith and becomes her knight in the jousting tournaments to which he is allowed to take her, despite what he from the beginning recognized about her:

What a distrubing woman she is—both for the devilish insight she appears to have into my misgivings, and the cruelly sophisticated way she is able to express it. I had an impression of profound and finely controlled hostility—even of threat—from her, and am afraid that in any conflict she may

choose to ordain between us I will find her more than "a match for me," as she put it.

---Lilith, pg. 155.

The influence of Spenser on Salamanca's novel is both allegorical and imagistic. Much of the purple prose of Lilith echoes the poetry of the Faerie Queene. Notice the almost scanable prose.

. . .I saw that someone. . .had dropped a bottle of some vivid purple fluid (gentian violet, I suppose) which had broken on the paving and spread out in a gorgeous darkly glittering pool, through which the splinters of stained glass stuck up like shattered peaks of tinted ice in a silent wine-dark sea. And while I stood staring down at it I experienced Odysseys of emotion; how many delectable images flashed through my mind in those few seconds! The faces and bodies of Sirens, splashed with purple foam, their hair and white limbs streaming with indigo, their eyes stained darkly as stained stones in the cold violet depths from which they had emerged. One with her mouth smashed against the rocks in the surf, moaning and turning her face toward me to be kissed, her lips burst like grapes. And beaches of glinting amethyst sand where their blue bones rolled forever in the lapse of lovely water.

---Lilith, pg. 183.

This is the wine of Excess Vincent sees, the wine from the cup Guyon smashed to the ground. These are the wanton sirens of the Wand'ring Islands beckoning to the temperate knight as he approaches the Bower of Bliss. Vincent, noticing the fluid on the paving, is beginning to yield to the enticements of Lilith.

So she to Guyon offered it to tast;
Who, taking it out of her tender hond,
The cup to ground did violently cast
That all in pieces it was broken found,
And with the liquor stained all the lond.

---Faerie Queene, Bk.2, Canto XII (LVII)

Notice also the relationship between these two passages:

She stood up in the grass and gathered

her skirts in her hands, stepping out cautiously into the placid water that glittered in the morning light. There were two Liliths, joined at their calves: one fallen, tremulous girl with rippling breasts looking up from her silver underworld, mocking every move my Lilith made. They watched each other merilly and tenderly.

---Lilith, pg. 171.

The wanton maidens himespying stood
Gazing awhile at his unwonted guise;
Then the one herself low ducked in the
flood;

Abashed that her a stranger did advise;
But the other rather higher did arise;
And her two lily paps aloft displayed,
And all that might his melting heart
entice

To her delights, she unto him be-
wrayed;

The rest, hid underneath, him more
desirous made.

---Faerie Queene (LXVI)

The significance of Lilith, of course, does not rest on its obvious debt to Edmund Spenser. Part of the book's importance lies in the analogy, especially meaningful to modern men, which Salamanca draws between

religious-moral values and the psychological nature of man. The same values upheld by Spenser in his allegory of the temperate man, are meaningful to Salamanca, and through his novel, to Twentieth Century Americans. Lilith is not a "novel of sexual obsession" in any derogatory sense, any more than the second book of the Faerie Queene is lewd poetry. It is, rather, a parable in a symbolic setting.

Just as Spenser, as a Christian, utilized the ideas of Plato and Aristotle in his moral allegory, so Salamanca depends upon Freud and Jung for guidance in his psychological drama. It is no mere coincidence that so many analogies exist between the Platonic conception of man in which he is rational (mind), indignitive (spirit), and appetitive (body), and the Freudian conception of the psyche composed of superego, ego, and id. Just as Guyon would have been destroyed had he yielded to his "appetitive" desires in the Bower of Bliss, so Vincent becomes "Gryll" and pander at Poplar Lodge, where the Id reigns. His lasciviousness results in tragedy. Lilith is, then, a significant mythopoeic novel, in which the reader may find both beauty and assurance that many of his "mythical" religious values are valid because they are mythical, are archtypal warnings and standards which relate to his psychological nature.





PHOTO BY J. GRAHAM

I

A dusty Palestinian street, mud dried into a brown-red dust which flows, and swirls and mourns as the winds and the animals and men kick it awake from its long-wanted sleep. The village, too, wants to sleep, to dream of centuries gone by, when there was a little more rain, a little more hope, when olives and grapes and figs grew and giants tilled the soil, when the dust was fertile and lived and made men happy. The crooked street was once a scene of gaiety, happy daughters, full lives, three score under a fig tree with a jug of wine, good weather, and a merciful G-d. And on the street, amid the robust vitality of an occasional ox-cart, sit two men, dressed in rags, sitting in the dust and becoming part of it.

What brought one of these men to the village was a dream of times gone by. Not his dream, but his father's and his grandfather's and back to the patriarchs of his family who dreamed of a land of milk and honey. When times were bad in Europe and death walked the street, hatchet in hand, these men dreamed of a just G-d and the land of three score and ten. So he sits, the embodiment of a movement, the man, once so alive, so European—he cared not for Jews or Religion or Nationalism, he cared just to live, love, breathe life and luxuriate in his one chief joy, chess.

Chaim "Nickolas" Reinsfaldt was a chess-player's master, a genius who broke all boundaries of physical bigotry by his power on the 64 squares. He was a matchless curio, small and dark, mustachioed and handsome, a chessplaying Cyrano whose only crooked nose was his father's religion.

His father, the baalabus of the Street of the Merchants, brought Chaim up with religious training, rather hypocritical in relation to the family's way of life. Chaim, versed in Hebraic history, culture, and law, left the sphere of Talmudic doctrine during his adolescence. He was, at an early age, a brilliant student who analyzed and disregarded, absorbed and discontented—he needed not his patriarchs forte, for his

father had money and he had non-Jewish friends. Nothing, no one, could bother him, save perhaps an unfaithful lover or on occasional bad move.

At the age of seven he received from his father a simple wooden chess set with tournament style pieces painted black and white. It was on this set that he learned his chess from an elderly rabbi, an acquaintance of his father, a solemn man knowing Eastern Europe's bigotry and accepting his peoples' fate. And so, the rabbi's knowledge was reflected in his game: solemn, accepting defeat as the will of G-d.

The night was Saturday, and the Reinsfaldt family accompanied by the rabbi had returned home from services. As was his custom, the rabbi, after eating with the family, would seat Chaim, his prized pupil, on his knee, and in the constant way of East European rabbis he would lecture to Chaim in a deep, stately, sorrowful voice. A line of the Torah, this commentator's opinion, then that rabbi's opinion, then a correlation to more modern times; and Chaim understood and questioned and disagreed and found new interpretations—the commentaries of the seven-year-old Chaim had much merit.

After an hour or so, Chaim, tiring of the formality of the Book, asked the rabbi to teach him chess. Not really wanting to engage in such frivolity, but after being persuaded that it was proper to play chess occasionally, the rabbi admitted that he would enjoy that weakness of the flesh. After half an hour was spent teaching the movement of the pieces, Chaim proposed a game. The first game was a rout. The rabbi, giving commentary on the weakness and irrationality of Chaim's moves and showing his own sedate, cautious style, won readily. The second game was a slightly different story. Chaim had already discovered and analyzed a very slight weakness in the rabbi's king-pawn opening. The commentaries of the rabbi continued as the pressure and concentration of the game built up. Then a push, a subtle exposé of a seemingly hidden bishop, a panic move by the rabbi. Quickly, it was over. No more

commentaries for a while, anyway.

Chaim enjoyed beating the rabbi, he enjoyed the thrill of the unorthodox moves he was making, he lusted after the tearing of stately wooden flesh—he felt free and unattached as he lost bishop to gain rook to check king to take queen. And he played, a free soul, constantly improving his dazzling game. His name, known to the world as Nickolas Rensky, was becoming more and more felt in the chess world as his daring conquered the master and caused a bit of uneasiness under the grandmaster's beard.

* * * * *

On the grand boulevard of the Duke de Warinskekov. Through a cobbled wilderness ten meters wide walked the rabbi, eyes depressed, leading a nervous, dark-skinned lad of eleven, dressed in his Sabbath finery. At the great gate, the old scholar knocked and waited and knocked again—humbly. They were finally led into a great antechamber screaming with vibrant colors and practicing jugglers. A brown bear danced, and acrobats swam through the air. A haunted violinist played melodic due to his Ouija board god. They waited, but had to take a room in an inn that night—Chaim's first night in a paid room. The next day they again waited, the rabbi tugging at his beard and the boy holding his beloved gift chess set. Chaim had beaten the village elders, and it was now time.

The Duke held audiences to grant this or that petition or to audition a juggler or a violinist for the evening's banquet. For the Jews, no audiences were granted the first day or the second—jugglers before scholars, gypsies before geniuses. Patiently, no malice, just respect, a respect for wealth and money but not man, they waited. The door finally opened, and the man and the boy entered. Short words and a hard laugh—a mere boy a chessplayer?

The inlaid board, the ivory pieces: the Duke was a connoisseur of beautiful chessmen. The board was set, the pieces explained. Chaim was given the first move, and he took the second and third. There was no need for an eighth move. The Duke was beaten.

The Duke, as the merchant Reinsfadlt hoped, took the boy into his household, Chaim became another of the Duke's chesspieces, and he constantly amazed the Duke's guests, winning for himself a great respect as a promising young master.

But the court chessmasters needed not to have feared the loss of then hard-won positions, for forces scorned by Chaim were to drag him away from his throne of two-dimensional godliness into the three-dimensional world of pain, hate and sickness. Chaim was almost to grow up.

Rows of torches house to house in an unbroken path of horror—not even worthy of the name animal; the Street of Merchants is no more. The gray street once with its own curious, dingy personality is blood-splattered with corpses hanging from ceilings and broken bodies rotting where they fell, cleaved from life with a butcher's blade. That blade, which severed bodies and cracked skulls, tore from Central Europe its middle class and its culture, castrated Eastern European scholarly endeavors, and thwarted the surge of what promised to be man's greatest renaissance.

The Year of the Most Merciful Christ 1872, and the Jews of Vilna, Chaim's family, the rabbi: all were gone. Chaim returned to the city two days after the ghetto fell. He was lucky, for he found enough of his parents for a decent burial. Yet other red-eyed young men who were not quite so lucky walked among the ashes, a student here, a merchant's son away on business there. This the camaraderie was unspoken, but they all knew. Their thoughts were soon realized, for the cell grew, the few survivors joining together with a common hate and a new doctrine spread by a radical political group organized mainly in Germany. The doctrine was Political Zionism, and with it, a new twist—self defense.

The change from the chessboard to Socialist Zionism was not too hard for Chaim; rather, it was a natural step up—from chesspieces and strategy to national destiny and politics. Chaim was adept, a planner, a formulator of schemes bold and daring; for just as he was a chessplayer's chessmaster he was a Zionist's Zionist, except for

one thing. He never believed those absurd ideas about equality, labor, and national purpose; rather, to him it was a great complex game with expotential rules and a fabulous array of pieces to move.

When living was dear and death imminent, he immigrated to Palestine and began a new career as one of the knights he once so boldly moved. An impossible figure he cut, gray stallion, Arab dress and long, black mustache—a figure so beautiful to the people he defended, the settlers, yet so tragicomic, for he knew now why he killed and why he rode. Yet he rode from Mount Tabor to Bethlehem, a Paladin so near to a Quixote.

II

On that dusty Palestinian street, leaning against a brown stucco wall, sits a Persian man, dressed in rags—sitting in the dust and becoming part of it. His name is Zerang, the second and youngest son of the house of Asb. His grandfather, after winning favor in the court of the Shah, had gone on to amass a great fortune in landholdings and the spice and horse trades. His father, Avvalin, had followed in the ways of the first great Asb, enlarging the fortune, cornering the trade of Arab horses for the Persian army, and building a large family home in Teheran. It was in this great house that Zerang, a child of his father's old age, a son groomed to the business of being wealthy and excelling as a merchant, grew up.

Café au lait-colored brick mud dried by the sun into a two-story labyrinth of rooms set in the corner of a walled garden lot. The rooms of this house were in direct conflict with each other; some were in the eastern mode with tapestries on the walls, Persian rugs on the floor, and glassed stained in the manner of old Baghdad. Others were quite European, with chairs and desks, clear windowglass, and even chic French wallpaper; while even others, like Avvalin Ash's office, were a synthesis of the two, with armchairs, desks, wall tapestries, a backgammon board, a chess set, and a water pipe.

When he was young, Zerang would stand quietly at his father's side watching him at his work, or relaxing, smoking his hooka while playing chess or backgammon with an

associate. The boy would haunt the many rooms of the great house and stand wide-eyed, drinking in the detail and complexity of his father's business and the family's way of life. Avvalin took great pride in his second son's interest, and encouraged him to pursue the knowledge and experience necessary to run the business. He gave his son everything: private instruction in Koran and Arabic, and a French governess who would expose him to Western thought and Western languages. The elder Asb loved his son and honestly wanted him to take advantage of the great wealth and prestige available. He hoped that his younger son would not be as rash and fanatical as his brother Javid, who, forsaking the family fortune, chose the life of the Mollah, the student of Koran.

The older son was slight of build and very dark of skin—a deep sensitive person whose keen-edged mind was tuned to the study of the metaphysical. He knew that he had found happiness with Koran, with his fellows at the Mosque. He appreciated his father's desires for the perpetuation of the house, but his life could not be spent thus—he had to study. He spent many hours with Zerang explaining the intricacies of the Prophet and the value of study. Zerang listened and understood the problems but was not concerned with the faith. All the hours that his brother spent with him he considered a mere waste.

By the time he was fifteen the pattern of his ways was clear. He would observe and see through; he would stand with an aloof look to his well-formed face and study the world as a child who watches a bird build a nest, knowing that when the bird is finished he will destroy her feeble endeavors. And he cared not for the gifts and glories of his father. He needed not the backgammon board or the chess set. He held no fascination for his governess' white white skin or his Mollah's devotion. He did not really appreciate the fine clothes or the ornate knife his father gave him. He saw no reason or pleasure in the activities of his elders, or perhaps he saw just too deeply into why men behave as they do, and act as they must. And for himself he wanted nothing, for he knew not what he really wanted.

His father, as Zerang grew through his teens, began to place more and more em-

phasis and responsibility on his son. And Zerang did what was asked of him and did it well—he had nothing better to do. His father's delegation of authority did, however, afford him some measure of crude adventure, for, in his baggy pants and pastel-colored shirts crisscrossed with an orante, jewel-studded knife, sheaf and belt, he traveled accompanied by a retinue of servants from Zanzibar to Afghanistan, buying spices and trading in horses. He became his father's agent and a stranger to his house.

On one of the trips back to Teheran, when Zerang was twenty, the conflict with his father began. His father was getting old, and his health steadily declined. He wanted to talk to Zerang about the business. It was important to the old man that before he die his son take wives and firmly establish himself in the great house. Avvalin Asb was crushed. Zerang did not want the house or the business. Working for his father, traveling, searching—this was acceptable; but the business, no.

Avvalin made arrangements for the sale of the house, and the distribution of his wealth on the occasion of what he knew was his rapidly approaching death. Part of the money was to be set aside for his wives and daughters, and the remainder was to go to the Mollahim of the Mosque, unless Zerang were to show within two months that he was going to continue the business, whereupon he was to get everything.

But a matter of horses, Arabian stallions, was at hand. The Shah wanted twenty-five whites, and the House of Asb was to procure them. They had to be of the finest quality, and among them had to be a horse worthy of the Shah himself. The horses were needed quickly, so Avvalin needed his finest agent to search the Arab world for them.

Zerang traveled through Iraq, into Syria, buying only an occasional stallion. Only the finest were chosen. By the end of the second month of his travel he had purchased twenty-four, some at bazaars, others from dealers, and some from under their riders. But the horse fit for the Shah himself escaped him. He sent his servants, except for his personal valet, back to Teheran with the horses, and instructed them to tell the elder Asb that he was still searching for the Shah's horse,

and that he would go to the Maghred if necessary to find it. And so he traveled into Lebanon to Beirut and to Tyre, continuing into Palestine searching the markets of Aco and Acziv until he came to Chadera Market, where in the shadow of the Mosque of Muusa he saw the horse. He sent his servant back to his father and went to the stall of the horsetrader.

III

Arab street, garbage-strewn, piled high with stink and rot, the road across the Mediterranean, song-singers and Chaim Nikolas Reinsfadlt, a player of games. Chaim had grown in the last few years, prospering in candle-lighted basement rooms, vodka and bread. He was still small, but he looked a man, with his long black mustache and his sharp strong features. You could not have known him, with his broad shoulders, his steady hand. From a scholar to a chess-player to a Zionist to a fighter; he was going to be a Shomer.

The Shomrim, the guards, the selfless idealists who risked their all to defend their brethren and prove to the Arabs that Jews are men. These Shomrim, these lance-wielding sons of Moses who fought the Turks, the Bedu, and the Arabs in the time-honored manner of hand-to-hand combat, earned for themselves respect in the eyes of the virility-worshipping Arabs, and the love and admiration of the pioneers. Among their ranks were jews from many lands—pious Hungarians, Turk-hating Eastern Jews, and an East European Paladin.

As did most Shomrim, Chaim took to the roads of Judea. A cocksure fighter, brash and boastful, he won respect saving maidens from Turkish dragons and Arab wizards. His exploits gave him great satisfaction, playing with life, adoring settlers, women, the maimed and bleeding left to die in the dust. He was the world chessmaster moving European pieces on an Oriental board. But he forgot that there are other knights in the world. He forgot, or never really learned, that a good chessplayer never underestimates his opponents. And so he was dethroned.

He had money in his pockets and fine clothes. He was the picture of a Shomer, but he was not content to be just a Shomer.

He wanted to be a Shomer's Shomer. He wanted the finest clothes, the greatest reputation, and the most magnificent stallion. After all, what is a Prince Valiant without an Avark to ride. Chaim was riding through the village of Chadera when he saw the great stallion that he wanted. He jumped off his horse and, hooking his thumbs in the bandoleers which crisscrossed his chest, strode up to the stall of the horsetrader, who was just being persuaded by Zerang that it was his duty to part with the stallion for the last few meager goldpieces in Zerang's purse, since it was for the Shah's stable. Zerang promised him a rich reward to be payed at some later date. But Chaim interrupted—a curse on the Shah, on any man who would ride that stallion other than Chaim. And a curse on the Shah's lackey who pays for a horse in gold rather than spilled blood. That was enough, the words of the strange foreigner were not to be tolerated. Zerang threw himself on Chaim. Chaim was down, then a shot, a curse, and a flashing blade. It was all over.

Chaim's semi-conscious body was dragged, bleeding, his right arm nearly severed, to the house of an old, pious Jew who lived on the Street of the horsetraders. He remained there for many weeks, sometimes clear of thought, but usually insane with the pain from his phantom arm and punctured gut.

Chaim had spent three weeks in the house of the Jew before he was well enough to leave, and when he left, his shrunken face was colorless and his eyes clouded. His rounded shoulders no longer carried his once proud head high; and his small feet no longer strode sure and straight as he hobbled into the sun.

His horse, proud clothes, and weapons had been sold by the Jew to help pay for his care. All he had left was his gift chess set, which had been taken from his saddlebag before the horse was sold. He had no place to go, he wanted no one to see him. All he wanted was to get back at that Arab and to show him who was superior. So he shuffled a few blocks and sat in the sun, his back against a brown stucco wall.

The sun was hot, and he fell asleep. As he slept, a generous Moslem on the way to the nearby mosque and a benevolent Jew dropped

coins onto the box which lay at the prostrate man's feet. When Chaim awoke, his near future was decided: he wasn't going to a thing except sit in the sun, beg, and feel sorry for himself.

The path of the bullet through Zerang's body was straight and true; the wound was deep and the effect it had great. His body was racked with fever and his constitution ruined by infection. Only the kindness and concern of the Talabeh, the pious students of the Koran, saved his life. During his convalescence these men became aware of the depths of Zerang's religious knowledge and his great intelligence. And he became aware of their true piety and application. He finally saw the message his brother tried to teach him. He understood the Koran for the first time.

Zerang was allowed to leave the mosque for an hour or two each morning, on the order of a physician. So he walked the streets around the mosque, considering a problem in the Koran or repeating to himself a paradigm of the complex Arabic verb structure. It was on one of these mornings that he met Chaim.

Chaim had been sitting there for three weeks before Zerang had seen him, and all that time a hate burned, a feeling of being cheated, of being ruined by a cur of a man who was not as good as he. His mind worked in crazy patterns, he needed revenge on the Persian—he had to show his superiority before he could rise out of the dust and face the world again. And just as strongly as the hate grew in Chaim's soul, a love for the foreigner who ruined his body grew in the heart of Zerang, and so when he saw Chaim he hobbled up to him, offered him peace, and begged his forgiveness. Chaim, sensing his chance to master the Persian, responded, starting a strange friendship.

Zerang knew that seeing this Jew was against the rules of his brotherhood, but he wanted to help Chaim. He wanted to tell him of Koran and peace and tranquility. Chaim listened, but didn't understand, for his mind was busy with the thought of chesspieces. The key to his early success was to be the mode of his revenge. He asked Zerang if he played, and Zerang replied that he knew of the pieces and their movement, but it was

not allowed for him to play. It was frivolous, a waste. But Chaim insisted and Zerang agreed that on the next day, if Chaim still desired it, he would join him in a game.

But it was too late for Zerang. The most revered Mollah had seen him with the Jew. He was stripped of the privilege of study. He was ostracized, never to study with a brotherhood again. So he left the Mosque and had no place to go, save to sit by Chaim in the dust, for he had renounced his now dead father's fortune and disgraced himself to the world.

The game was played, Zerang moving first. A bad move, king's bishop's pawn four, and Chaim responded in a typical European way: queen's bishop's pawn three. And Zerang kept moving, impossible moves, without the power of the Russian master or the regimentation of the German school, in fact no European other than Chaim himself ever made such moves.

Chaim picked up a bishop, and then lost a

knight to gain a second bishop and a pawn. Chaim relaxed enjoying the prospect of a long, drawn out mismatch, as he moved in the staid pattern of his one-time opponents. A slow attrition and an evergrowing piece advantage for Chaim, as Zerang began to develop a strange sequence of moves, an interesting buildup. Chaim took notice but continued his classic wearing down defensive game. Zerang moved his king—no European would do that. Chaim chuckled as he picked up Zerang's last knight, and he began to give commentary of the game. In a deep and steady voice, he talked of Zerang's naivety, until it was too late. Zerang sacrificed his queen, exposing a rook and trapping Chaim with his king.

* * * * *

Chaim lies in the dust, and Zerang leans against the brown stucco wall. There is no place to go as the brown-red dust swirls and mourns.

DEJA VU

by Arthur Vogelsang

*Memory makes what small boys have done
Slide fast and slow on the slick screen of my mind.
Oh not as when one unmoving winter day
My father's coat worn through the wicked war
Charmed purest me so that I stood and smiled
At its color's strange name and its earthen smell.*

*But as when faster than it can be told
The ball rose, then slowed,
And tumbled brown on blue
When we as boys
Ran to them with it, clashed quick now
Over the pungent green grass
And where I was not looking
Someone sunk into my side,
Breath was expelled,
And slowly we rolled and rolled.*

*Or as when now, again as before,
Part of the boat's olive-drab, rust-fetid end falls away
Against the blue Pacific sea,
We trudge through the waves
And run on slipping sand
To the green orange-flashing trees
Where suddenly I could not see
As something sunk into my side,
Breath was expelled,
And I rolled and rolled.*

She had just got out of the shower at the end of the hall and was headed for her room when she heard the voices and thought she'd take a look. Standing at the top of the stairs in her bulky green bathrobe, she eyed the young man who was standing below in the parlor arguing with Auntie Slibberth. Another lousy artist was her judgment. He was arguing about the price of the room, and he had, besides a small suitcase in his left hand, a bulging cardboard box tucked under his right arm. On his face she thought she could see that nebulous quality which she had learned to identify as sensitivity.

The cardboard box was the key to him. If he painted, like Nicole, it would contain sketches; if he composed, like Rob, it would contain sheets of music; if he wrote, like Will had written (over three years ago—Christ, so long! He had come in with a suitcase full of manuscript—useless stuff that had no life in it—he had destroyed it that drunken night, recognizing it for what it was) if he wrote, like Will had written, the box would be full of unpublished dreams. She never read any herself but they were always anxious to read to her, and she didn't mind; she would do her nails, comb her hair, listen to the voices full of pride, listen to the world-saviours, the world-destroyers, listen to the high-flying minds building their elaborate falsifications. If she yawned, they didn't really mind. Except Will. He had dug his fingers into her shoulders and shook her, cursed her for mocking him, then got drunk with her the same night.

She slipped her right hand under the neck of the robe, the bare skin of her shoulder warm to her fingers. The stereo in Rob's room was blasting through the closed door. She tried to tap her foot to the music but couldn't hit the right beat. She never could to Rob's music, not even to the symphony he wrote and dedicated to her, the symphony that all his hopes were on now because someone, she forgot who, had heard it and liked it. Now Rob wore a suit all the time and went to appointments. The first time she ever saw him in the suit had been the night he was thinking about suicide.

"That isn't foot-tapping music," he had told her once. "That isn't what it's for."

"Ahhh, what the hell good is it then?" she wanted to know, but Rob, in those days, could never get out of his dream world long enough to hold a decent conversation.

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When she brought over her rock and roll collection, he was insulted, but he couldn't have her except on her terms, and he met them, grudgingly at first, lately with enjoyment.

"God, ain't this some kind of living," she exclaimed, lying in bed with him, a sheet covering half their nakedness, the record screaming about 1-o-v-e, four letters which spell dynamite. He fell asleep and she searched through his precious albums until she found the only one that she liked, the Overture of 1812. She put it on, played it low until right before the end, right at that moment's silence before the final cannon; then she twisted the volume knob as high as it would go and waited what seemed like hours, the bare bulb overhead throwing heat as well as light, the shadowed walls tensed and waiting with her, Rob asleep and waiting with her, and when the cannon roar hit it was like a peal of thunder that she could almost see exploding out of black clouds, crashing through the room and through her mind, until Rob was there beside her, kneeling, staring at her, and she at him, grinning because she had gained his essence as well as his body, and now had him completely, if only for the moment.

"What about Will?" he asked her.

"This don't have nothing to do with Will," she said, her lower lip thrust out poutingly, making her face childish, the way Will had liked her best. "This is just me and you, Rob."

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The young man was coming up the stairs. He looked at her, then past her, then at his feet the rest of the way up.

"Hi," she smiled. "You got number four?"

He mumbled something that had to be affirmative, room four being the only unoccupied room. Shuffling past her, he went down the hall, stopped in front of room four and put down his suitcase. Holding tightly to his cardboard box, he inserted the key into the lock with his left hand, twisted his wrist and pushed. The door swung open.

He picked up the suitcase again, turned his head to look at her. She nodded to him and smiled again. Returning the nod, but not the smile, he went in and the door closed with a gentle click. She didn't hear the click, not above Rob's stereo, but she knew the sound of that door closing.

"Angie! I see you up there gawking."

"Oh, go somewhere," Angie mumbled, knowing she could say it out loud without her Auntie Slibberth doing anything. Auntie was stuck with her, had been for eight years, ever since her sister, Angie's mother, had died.

"Angie! I said I see you up there."

Angie moved away from the stairs, out of her aunt's view. She could remember when Auntie Slibberth had been kind to her, but that had been when her mother was alive and when the paternity suit was pending and pending, and it looked like her mother had a case against that son-of-a-bitch who was now living on an island in the Pacific, doing abstract sculpture of the native forms. Whenever she saw one of his works, whenever she saw his name in the paper, she felt a closeness to her mother that she had never felt when her mother was living.

"That's my father," she told Will once, pointing at the cover portrait on Life magazine. Will's laughter had hurt then, but hurt never lasted long between them.

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"Goddamnit, Angie, I have work to do. Will you get out of here?"

She could still see him hunched over the typewriter, his vital fingers dancing. She knew she didn't have to leave, knew she had the power to gain his attention, even if only for a while.

"Are you still here? Okay, wait a minute."

Another paragraph, and the chair scraped

back and he had time for her, time out from the novel that held him more than she ever could.

A hell of a book! the Times said. On the best seller lists over a year, sold to the movies for an even half-million. Angie went to see the movie and kept seeing Will instead of the actor.

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Nicolo sympathized enough to hold her hand, which didn't help at all. She kept seeing Will, tall, husky, alive, at the same time feeling Nicolo's small tender hand in hers, and when they got to Nicolo's room she let the unconscious resentment pour out in the only way she knew how.

"You get away from me," he screamed. "Don't you know anything? I hold your hand and it's nothing to you but physical. You can't pervert me. Rob, yes, but not me."

Nicolo had the distinction of being an almost-genius. Always almost. He had three disciples who came in to watch him work and listen to him talk. A brilliant young painter, but somehow he was never hung in the galleries, somehow no one could remember to buy his paintings. Angie couldn't understand how his genius could go unrewarded, but she was glad. It served him right for the way he avoided the reality of her physical presence, making her feel like a statue instead of a person.

But she liked the way he trembled when she teased. Rob had once trembled, but no longer. Will had never trembled. Will had looked in her eyes, enjoyed her, and laughed.

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"Forget him," Rob told her, only three days ago. "I'll take you with me."

"That's been years," she said then. "He don't mean a damn to me anymore."

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In her room, she stood before the mirror, staring at herself in the green bathrobe. A young pretty woman. She might go with Rob. But Will had told her she could go and then

forgot the promise when the glory came. Of course Nicolo was still with her. He was nice to her. He bought her coffee at the restaurant and took her to the movies and talked and talked with her about art and the greater reality.

In white blouse, black skirt, black nylons, black heels, her hair combed out, hanging lazily on her shoulders, she walked casually down the hall to room number four, tapped lightly but firmly on the door with a single knuckle.

The door opened a crack, then fully, and the young man stood directly in front of her. To

his left she could see the cardboard box lying on the familiar bed, surrounded by neat piles of notebooks and typed manuscript. Very conscious of her appearance, she smiled.

"I'm Angie," she said. "In number one, down the hall."

He hesitated a long moment, then stepped aside, saying, almost incoherently, "Yeah, yeah, sure. Come on in." But he wouldn't look at her as she entered, and could only stand embarrassedly in front of her when she closed the door. The gentle click soothed her, and she laughed softly, warmly. Just being in the room again helped.

PORTRAIT IN YELLOW

by Michael Gura

*The trees are where they used to be,
But the years have made us strangers.*

*We embrace the Copper Beech ochre with season,
Or the pines' bellies, untouched by the sun,
Yellow as usual; but the Autumn joy is wholly hers.*

*The house needs painting, as it did years before.
Even so, she exclaims, she is certainly happy
With the roof as it is, yellow and cracked,
And with the fallen-out whitewashed boards stacked
Peeling and yellowed, like Autumn, by the door.*

*Her movement the mystery of a falling leaf,
She dances to the dry crackling of this sheaf
Of old letters I wish to God she had thrown away.
My own letters—code to me! I helplessly lay
Them aside to watch her dance with a memory.*

THE PRISONERS

by Ken Stronder

They gave us syrup to cover our bread, and sauce to wash it down with, and they closed the door, and left us alone.

Were you alone?

Doors were closed, but eyes could enter. Often we heard the scratching of nails on the outer wall. Once I looked up. There was nothing to see.

Could you see?

A window was placed in the wall like a block. Shadows passed over its filmy surface, and at even times it became dark. Once I saw the shadow of what might have been a wing, but it passed quickly, and there was nothing to see after that.

But at least you could hear.

Oh yes, the sound was always there, the twitching, the rubbing, the dragging, and often there was another sound, but it is not pleasant to speak of.

What did you do with your time?

Once I drew a face upon the air, and it rippled in front of me for a moment before a light breeze took it away. Another time I pulled a tree from the floor, and it grew in our room until it reached the ceiling, and birds came to build their nests, and new sunlight caught the young buds of leaves and gave them strength. But then the tree grew through the roof, and other hands pulled it upward, and it was taken from us.

Were there other things?

Oh yes, our time was not spent in dreaming. On days when there were no words to be spoken, we would build small cities from the dust and chips of clay we found upon the floor. Armies disguised as pebbles moved from these places. Regiments moved upon modest hills.

THE KING'S BRAVE HORSEMEN

by Ken Stronder

Seven horses fell.

He who was my rider fell darkly to the waves. Sand crept into his boots, the beating earth drummed the journey of his six brothers, and I who stood beneath the arbor found grapes tossed up by the sea. My king rode out into a dark field, his hunters beat the trees, and his messenger arrived with word of the first falling. Let them continue, spoke the king, and six horses rode into the water.

Let he who calls the fifth horse put not his hand upon our brother, for he who rides under the waves finds not a steady mount, and he who journeys to our kingdom finds a rival to his sword. Thus spake the lords of a deeper country, and five shadows swam over a sinking helmet.

I who bore the fifth rider carried no name, for such was my speed that words would not hold me. Up the shore and into the dark woods we rode, and the sweeping limb which chose my rider carried no birds. Other birds flew up with the clang of metal and wood, and I turned riderless to the empty forest.

Then the king and his huntsmen were weary, and the messenger went away to another hill.

He who was the fourth rider broke into the sun, and the yawning pit called his journey's end. I who was the fourth horse pawed wildly into the air, falling as a wingless bird through the waiting trees. Let the king return to his waiting bed. No comfort will I find for him.

Three gallant horsemen stormed the valley. The giant slew them with a blow. The messenger returned from the hill, and the king with his huntsmen rode through the castle gates.

AWARDS

\$20 prose award and \$20 poetry award contributed by the Student Union Book Store

Prose

Richard Farber

The Beggars of Chadera

Poetry

Peter M. Burtram

An Experience

Graham







